

Improve Student Achievement in Elementary, Middle and High Schools

Tollgate #1

1. Key indicators that will provide the best evidence to the citizen that this result is being achieved.

Indicators	Same, Modified, New?
#1 - Reduce gaps in student achievement between ethnic and income groups	Same indicator, modified data / graph
#2 - Improve test scores over time	Same indicator, modified data / graph
#3 - Increase high school graduation rate	Same

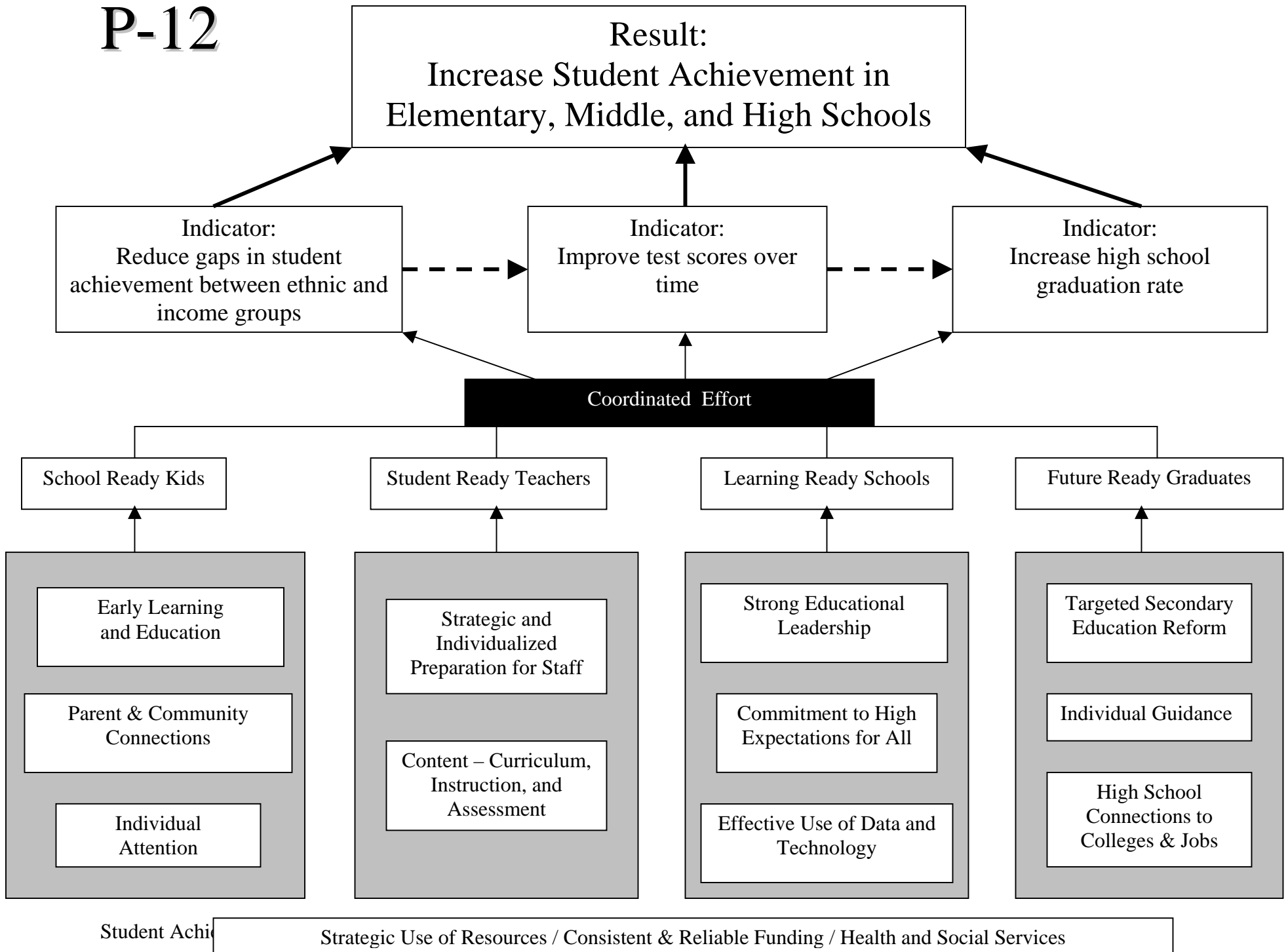
While the indicators remain the same, it is recommended that the data elements reflected in the graphs and tables for indicators #1 and #2 be changed. The current graphs and data table in these indicators relate tenth grade achievement information only. The topic of the overall result affects all levels of the P-12 system. Therefore it is recommended that:

- The graph for indicator #1 would show reading and mathematics achievement gap information, related to poverty level, as reflected at the fourth grade, an elementary school measure, instead of tenth grade. Additional data links would display income and ethnic group achievement gap information at the fourth grade and at seventh and tenth grades as well. The current graph shows a snapshot of the achievement gap. Additional links would display the achievement gap over time to measure progress at reducing the gap at all grade levels and among all subgroups.
- The graph for indicator #2 would display seventh grade reading and mathematics academic achievement over time, a middle school measure, instead of tenth grade. Additional data links would display academic growth in reading and mathematics at the fourth and tenth grades.

2. The Cause and Effect Map for the Result Area

The causal map has been updated to show stronger linkages among the most influential strategies to the result indicators. The strategies have been grouped under major purchase categories. However, all strategies continue to influence all indicators in the P-12 causal map and the map is designed to emphasize the need to coordinate state-wide efforts. The revised map incorporates new strategies of strong educational leadership, effective use of data and technology, parent and community connections, and individual guidance. It also refines the other strategies from the prior map. For example, professional development now emphasizes strategic and individualized preparation of staff.

P-12



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3. An initial assessment of the success or failure of current strategies

A. Does the current budget include funding for all of the significant strategies identified by the teams last time? Which strategies were not funded in the budget?

The five key strategies identified in 2002 were addressed positively and negatively by the budgets passed in 2003 and 2004. A summary follows:

Focus base funding on increasing student achievement:

- The primary task was to eliminate \$503 million from discretionary programs in K-12 and reprogram the monies to new programs and strategies. Given the nature of the budget problem in 2003-05, this was only partially completed by accepting some of the reductions, without reprogramming those dollars into new P-12 strategies.¹
- The majority of the K-12 maintenance level budget was funded with the exception of levy equalization, which was pro-rated at 93.7%; Initiative 732 cost of living increases for staff and Initiative 728 scheduled increases, which were suspended; and state special education allocations, which incorporated federal funding into formula increases.
- The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) funding was not expanded nor improved to recognize inflation.
- Schools for the deaf and blind children received appropriations close to the full amount required for maintaining current programs, with each school at approximately 97% of the maintenance level.

School ready kids and families

- While no additional resources were appropriated for tasks related to preparing children for school, the Office of the Governor, OSPI and DSHS are working to develop kindergarten readiness guidelines.
- Child care funds supporting subsidies to parents as well as professional development of licensed providers were significantly reduced beginning in fiscal year 2003.

Student ready teachers

- The broad category of improving teacher preparation experienced a number of actions, but did not include large scale changes to the professional development or compensation structures: the beginning teacher salary levels were improved slightly for both years of the biennium, certificate holders of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards have their stipend placed on a solid footing, plans were initiated to bring alternative routes to certification to additional areas of the state, the expected I-732 COLA improvements were suspended and scheduled to resume in the 2005-07 biennium.
- Targeted educational programs to meet the needs of individual students found improvements in the updated design of the Learning Assistance Program and the formula by which funds for this program are allocated to school districts, placing a greater emphasis on family income factors; OSPI initiated the secure student identifier and the core student record system; legislation was enacted to provide for educational plans for students unsuccessful on state assessments and to assist school districts by beginning to provide individual diagnostic assessment instruments for classroom use in reading and mathematics.

Learning Ready Schools

- Assistance and accountability for low performing schools was enhanced by increases in the state focused assistance program and resources to develop better mathematics instruction and alignment strategies. However, the educational services districts lost core funding which translates into diminished support for the school districts they serve and decreased coordination of statewide services.

¹ It should be noted that the reductions in two significant state programs, I-732 and I-728, discussed further in this document, were considered funded for purposes of determining a school district's base for local maintenance and operations levies, which allows school districts to maintain the expected increases in levy capacity even after state revenues are reduced.

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- Targeted resources to school improvement strategies were slowed when the increased support for I-728 funding was delayed until the 2005-07 biennium.

High school connections to college and jobs

- Rewards and incentives for academic success were not specifically addressed.
- Making high school relevant and linked to post-secondary education options were addressed in several ways. High school transcripts will have Certificate of Academic Achievement WASL information included which some institutions of higher education will use in their processes of admission and support. Promise Scholarships will continue to award achieving high school seniors with an improved scholarship amount.

B. Looking at the performance and indicator information available to you at this time, how would you describe progress in achieving this result?

- All indicators of student success are up: SAT, ACT, ITBS, ITED, NAEP, WASL, and enrollment in AP courses and career and technical programs.
- The longer students are in the Washington education system, the stronger their assessments.
- Overall, achievement gaps remain among ethnic and poverty groups, however noticeable progress is being made for some populations at certain grade levels.
- Due to changes in federal requirements, the graduation rate methodology has been adjusted, therefore we cannot yet compare our progress over time. Data will improve as we implement the secure student identifier system.

C. What are the most significant areas of success in this result area today?

- We have seen a return on strategic investments. Specialized programs, targeted to schools with high poverty rates, demonstrate sustained student academic improvement. Programs include the math helping corps and focused assistance.
- Implementation of the secure student identifier is providing useful data and analysis for decision-making.
- Legislation requiring a Certificate of Academic Achievement is a significant step in making the diploma meaningful and assuring future-ready graduates. Program components were funded in the budget: provision of retakes, development of an alternative assessment or appeals process, and requirements for high school graduation progress plans and plans for post high school.

D. Where do you see the most significant performance gaps? Do these gaps represent the failure of a strategy, the failure to fund a given strategy, or something else?

The achievement gap remains among socioeconomic and ethnic diverse groups. Significant investments for these populations have not been funded, including state-wide strategy coordination, early education and individual student support.

E. Where are the most significant opportunities to improve results?

- Create a quality teacher preparation and professional development system in which each stage of the teacher's development is connected and linked to a statewide delivery system with financial benefits. This is to be open to and coordinated with early education providers.
- Expand early education opportunities and utilize kindergarten readiness guidelines.
- Fully implement a core student record system to inform policy makers, researchers, districts, teachers and parents. This system should include links with pre-kindergarten data.
- Increase statewide capacity to assist schools and districts with school improvement planning and implementation.